

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 28, 2016

SENATE BILL

No. 1212

Introduced by Senator Hueso

February 18, 2016

An act relating to telecommunications.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1212, as amended, Hueso. "2-1-1" information and referral network.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including telephone corporations. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), pursuant to its existing authority over the North American Numbering Plan, has established several abbreviated dialing codes, including designating the number 9-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain emergency services, designating the number 3-1-1 for persons to dial for nonemergency police assistance, and designating the number 2-1-1 for persons to dial to obtain information about, and referral to, community social services. Pursuant to authority delegated by the FCC to state regulatory bodies and its existing statutory authority, the Public Utilities Commission has established procedures for implementing 2-1-1 dialing in California.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to facilitate the expansion of 2-1-1 services into those counties in California where they are lacking and to support a comprehensive statewide database that will connect all callers to information and referrals they need. The bill would additionally state the intent of the Legislature to facilitate access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral services, uniformly in the state, especially in hard-to-serve rural areas, through a universally available telephone service. The bill

would authorize moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission to be expended to help close telephone service gaps in counties lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information, and referral services, through a universally available high-quality basic telephone service to all residents of California regardless of region. The bill would additionally authorize moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission to be used to fund and improve a coordinated database to provide regional referrals to help with all aspects of disaster planning, recovery, and response.

~~Existing law authorizes a local public agency, as defined, to establish a nonemergency “311” telephone system, and authorizes the Public Safety Communications Division in the Office of Emergency Services to, among other things, aid local public agencies in the formulation of concepts, methods, and procedures that will improve the operation of the “311” systems and to increase cooperation among public agencies.~~

~~This bill would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation to enhance the status and system of the 211 information and referral network to provide coordinated services and resources to all California residents.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~-yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) *The Legislature finds and declares all of the*
2 *following:*
3 (1) *In order to create a statewide disaster preparedness,*
4 *response, and recovery system and to facilitate the reach of local*
5 *services to vulnerable populations, this act is established to expand*
6 *2-1-1 services to all areas of California that do not currently have*
7 *access to this vital service.*
8 (2) *2-1-1 service is a free, accessible, three-digit telephone*
9 *number that gives everyone in covered areas access to needed*
10 *community services. First established in 2005, 2-1-1 service now*
11 *covers 38 California counties. It is available 24 hours a day, seven*
12 *days a week, allowing residents to access information about health*
13 *and human services, emergency care, crisis intervention, and*
14 *disaster preparedness, response, and recovery when they need it*
15 *most.*

1 (3) 2-1-1 service is a natural hub for disaster-related
2 information and plays a critical role during emergencies and
3 disasters, such as fires, floods, earthquakes, terrorist attacks, and
4 epidemics, reducing nonemergency call volume on 9-1-1 lines,
5 which frees up emergency responders to deal with true life-or-death
6 situations, thus leveraging local public safety resources.

7 (4) 2-1-1 service also increases the reach of government,
8 nonprofit, and community programs by offering callers information
9 on and access to a variety of health and human services, rent and
10 utility assistance, physical and mental health resources,
11 employment opportunities, support for older Americans and
12 persons with disabilities, and support for families with special
13 needs.

14 (5) 2-1-1 service call centers are staffed with highly trained
15 specialists who have expertise in navigating the web of health and
16 human services in a particular community and who have up-to-date
17 information and guidance for callers in times of disaster.

18 (6) 2-1-1 service call center specialists are able to answer calls
19 in over 150 different languages; they are able to provide critical
20 health information to otherwise hard-to-reach ethnic populations.

21 (7) Twenty rural counties in California currently do not have
22 access to 2-1-1 services, creating holes in referral services and
23 disaster response capability.

24 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature, in enacting this act, to
25 facilitate the expansion of 2-1-1 services into those counties in
26 California where they are lacking and to support a comprehensive
27 statewide database that will connect all callers to the information
28 and referrals they need.

29 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature to facilitate access to
30 disaster preparedness, response, and recovery information, and
31 referral services, uniformly in the state, especially in hard-to-serve
32 rural areas, through a universally available telephone service.

33 (d) Moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities Commission
34 may be expended to help close telephone service gaps in counties
35 lacking access to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery
36 information, and referral services, through a universally available,
37 high-quality basic telephone service to all residents of California
38 regardless of region. Moneys appropriated to the Public Utilities
39 Commission may also be used to fund and improve a coordinated

1 *database to provide regional referrals to help with all aspects of*
2 *disaster planning, recovery, and response.*

3 ~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact~~
4 ~~legislation to enhance the status and system of the 2-1-1~~
5 ~~information and referral network to provide coordinated services~~
6 ~~and resources to all California residents.~~